

## **IDAHO SPOKESMAN REVIEW**

### **Board OKs new degree at college; Radiography technology program at NIC to take five semesters**

Taryn Brodwater  
Staff writer  
August 12, 2005

The state Board of Education on Thursday gave North Idaho College approval to expand its professional-technical program by offering an applied science degree in radiography technology.

Graduates of the five-semester program can work in a variety of medical settings, using X-rays, ultrasounds and other technology to make images of the body for diagnosis and treatment.

Startup costs for the program, expected to begin in fall 2006 with 10 students, are estimated at \$373,000. President Michael Burke said NIC has requested a federal appropriation and reallocated funds from other areas of its budget.

Burke said NIC is adding three professional-technical programs online this fall: landscape technology, human resources assistant and outdoor recreational vehicle repair. The college is also reviving its welding program, which was axed in 2003 due to budget cuts.

The college has recently drawn criticism from some Republican legislators, area business leaders and even in an editorial in a Moscow, Idaho, newspaper. Some say the college isn't meeting the needs of local employers.

Board member Karen McGee told Burke during Thursday's meeting that she felt like NIC's mission should be to provide what the workforce needs. She questioned whether NIC was fulfilling that mission.

"There is incredible growth going on here," Burke said. "The workforce demands are increasing dramatically, almost overnight, in our community ... We are actively engaged in conversation with those business leaders."

The state board voted Thursday to forward a list of capital requests for funding in 2007 to the Division of Public Works for consideration. North Idaho College seeks money to remodel Seiter Hall, \$5.3 million to acquire property in Coeur d'Alene's Education Corridor and \$11.5 million for a professional-technical facility.

Rolly Jurgens, NIC's vice president for administrative services, said the facility would be shared by the college and Lakeland, Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls school districts.

The combined capital requests of NIC and the state's other higher education institutions amount to nearly \$263 million – compared to recent annual allocations of about \$30 million.

The board unanimously endorsed a task force's recommendations Thursday to increase requirements and expectations at the middle- and high-school level.

Graduation requirements would be increased from two years of math to four and from two years of science to three. Students would also be required to take a college entrance exam their junior year and complete a senior project. The number of elective classes would be cut from 17 semester credits to seven, but students will have to take an additional eight credits that tie in with their post-secondary goals.

The task force, headed by Coeur d'Alene board member Sue Thilo, is calling for increased rigor at the middle-school level. Students will have to have a C average in core classes to move on to high school and also complete a pre-algebra class.

"We're not doing students a favor advancing them in the system when they're not prepared for the next step," Thilo said.

Thilo said her committee found research showing that students perform better when more is expected of them.

The ultimate goal of the task force is to increase the number of students who continue their education past high school. Thilo said almost 80 percent of Idaho students graduate from high school, but fewer than 40 percent go on to college.

The state board plans to hold hearings throughout the state before considering final approval of the recommendations. Either the House or Senate education committee would have to also approve the changes.